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IMMEDIATE EMANCIPATION.

THE SPEECH

OF

LORD BROUGHAM

IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS,

ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20TH, 1838,

ON

SLAVERY AND THE SLAVE-TRADE.

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LORD BROUGHAM'S SPEECH.

I do not think, my lords, that on any other occasion but one, in the whole course of my parliamentary life, I have ever risen, in either house, with so much anxiety as that with which I now present myself to your lordships' notice. The occasion on which alone I ever experienced a similar feeling, was that on which I brought under the consideration of the House of Commons the conduct pursued in our West India Islands towards those of our unhappy brethren who were there in a state of slavery and suffering. On that occasion, I felt that on the result of the great debate in which the House of Commons then engaged, depended, not only the interests of the unfortunate negro race then existing in the West Indies, but the ultimate fate of the whole of that race in future time. But I have something now to maintain my spirits, my lords, which I did not enjoy at the period to which I have just alluded. For, whereas then the sky was dark around me, whereas then there was scarcely a ray of hope to cheer me, whereas every thing combined to inspire fear and dismay, we are now happily arrived at such a point in the discussion of this most important affair as to throw a bright light over the path on which we are about to enter, and to warrant us in entertaining the expectation of an almost immediate and most satisfactory result of our labours. I attribute much of this to the debate to which I have just alluded. I must add, my lords, that I shall feel gratified beyond measure, if, through my means, the House of Lords should be recommended to the favourable feelings of the country by leading the way to a safe, practical, but glorious settlement of a question in which the country feels so deep an interest. My lords, if your lordships already enjoy the favourable opinion of the country, depend upon it that that opinion will be maintained and increased by the adoption of this course ; and if, on the other hand, your lordships should unhappily, by any accidental differences of opinion, find yourselves in a situation in which you have any part of the favourable opinion of the country to recover, I know no surer, no more speedy mode by which that desirable object may be accomplished. But, my lords, I do not rest my case and my appeal to your lordships on this ground. I claim your concurrence in my motion from your justice ; I claim it from your reason ; I claim it from your consciences ; I claim it from your duty to God and man ; I claim it from a due consideration to your own consistency. Follow up in 1838 the wise and Christian principles which you asserted in 1833 ; that is all that I require of you. My lords, I will rush at once into the midst of this argument. I will delay no longer on the outskirts of the ground. I will not waste another moment in prefatory matter.

I will come at once to the subject of the SLAVE-TRADE ; that is

the question which I bring before you ; that is the usage which I have already here and elsewhere denounced. On that subject there can be no difference of opinion. On that subject we have reason, argument, fact, experience, all on our side. I call upon your lordships to take the matter into your own hands. I call upon the Parliament of this country to legislate upon it. To use the words of Mr. Canning, I will trust no master of slaves to give laws respecting slavery. Yet on the subject of the slave-trade I can set before your lordships the example of those masters, and I call on you to follow their example, and to put it down. My lords, I hold in my hand a document of great importance, which I thank Heaven I have lived to see, proceeding from the Legislature of Jamaica itself. This document proceeds from masters of slaves. It proceeds from the representatives of all the slave-owners of the Island of Jamaica ; and on this occasion, feeling that they represented the slaves themselves, they have approached the Sovereign with a unanimous address, thankful, as they express themselves, tardily thankful, that the slave traffic has been now put down by the Imperial Parliament for above thirty years, and beseeching the Sovereign, with the advice and assistance of Parliament, to consummate the great work, to prohibit for ever the traffic in human beings, and to join with all the other powers of Europe interested in the trade in the only effectual remedy for the evil—namely, to declare that to be piracy and murder by the law of nations which is already piracy and murder by the law of God. My lords, the terms in which the Legislature of Jamaica have expressed themselves are these: “Nor can we forego the higher position, as a question of humanity: representing all classes in the island, we consider ourselves entitled to offer to your Majesty the respectful remonstrance to the continuance of this condemned traffic in human beings. As a community composed of the descendants of Africa as well as of Britain, we are anxious to advance the character of the country, and we, therefore, entreat your Majesty to exert your interest with foreign powers to cause this trade at once to be declared piracy, as the only effectual means of putting it down, and thereby grace the commencement of your auspicious reign.”

My lords, I will not stop here to remind the lawgivers of Jamaica why it is that the slave-trade is a crime of so deep a dye as that which they justly describe it to be. I will not stop here to remind them that if slavery existed no more in the West Indies than it does in England, that if the West India negro had no lash applied to his back, that if there were no prisons, no handcuffs, no colliers, no chains, no treadmills, no starvation, no means of extorting excessive labour from slavery in the West Indies, the slave-trade would not be that which it is. That which they so happily denounce, that which they so well call a crime, not a trade, that which brings over unhappy Africans to the islands of the West, would no longer inflict the misery which they now call on their Sovereign to relieve. But, my lords, that you should ever unite your voices with theirs in maintaining the horrors to which I have alluded, is a consummation so little to be dreaded that I will not delay you longer on that point.

And, therefore, only recalling your lordships' attention to what I stated to you on a former occasion, recalling your lordships' attention to the facts I then unfolded, the pernicious influence of head-money, and, above all, the uninterrupted trade in slaves carried on by Portugal and Spain, I now implore your lordships to join in the only measure that can effectually prevent it. Since those statements were made, my lords, they have been promulgated all over the kingdom. They have met with no contradiction, nor excited the least complaint in any quarter, except that many have said the case was understated; and that in one place, and only in one, I have been charged with exaggeration. That exception is this—that in a daily newspaper, the principal one on the part of the Government, but certainly from no fault of its respectable conductor, I have read with astonishment, and I repel the insinuation with scorn, that I had acted the part of an advocate, and that my facts were misrepresented and exaggerated. How dares any man so to charge me? How dares any man, without giving his name, to vent so false, so slanderous an imputation? I come forward in my own proper person, I state my case, I drag the criminal to justice, I defy the evil-doer, I defy his defender, and I challenge investigation. How dares any man who shrinks and skulks under a false name, charge me with having spoken like an advocate from a brief, and with having misrepresented the facts? My lords, the absurdity of this charge outstrips its malice. I stated that negroes, in order to lighten the ship when chased, were thrown overboard by pairs, in fetters, to insure their being drowned before they could be captured by the cruizer to give evidence against their murderers. The answer to this is, that this man (if he be a man) has been on board slave ships, and has never seen such a practice! I stated that the fetters of the slaves were not locked, but rivetted in the forge. The answer is, that he has been on board slave ships, and has seen fetters; and that those fetters were locked, not rivetted in the forge. How dares any man deny a fact upon such a trumpery allegation? As if it were anything like a proof that a crime had not been committed, that a certain individual did not happen to be present at its commission! According to this, ten, twenty, or a hundred persons might prove a murder which they saw with their own eyes; and another might come forward and say, "The accusation is false, for I was not present when the crime was done!" My lords, did I not state my authority? Did I not avouch my author? Did I not say that by Commodore Hayes, of her Majesty's navy, I was put in possession of the facts? And, so far from any exaggeration, I did not state scarcely half the atrocities which Commodore Hayes has since described in his despatch!

I will now tell you, my lords, what I withheld. I call upon my noble friend, the noble Marquis, the late Governor of Jamaica, himself a planter, himself a proprietor of slaves, to say whether he did not know a vessel with a space of only three feet and a half between the decks—

Lord SLIGO—Two and a half.

Lord BROUGHAM—There, my lords, I am understating again—with a space of only two feet and a half between the decks, a hundred and fifty of these wretched beings had been crowded and jammed in a way in which no Christian would treat the lower animals? I ask my noble friend whether he did not know of such a vessel, a vessel which had become to all the senses a nuisance not fit to be described? The ophthalmia had broken out in that vessel to a considerable extent; and whenever a poor wretch was seized with it, instead of having medical assistance, instead of a surgeon being called in to relieve his sufferings, he was instantly, and in his chains, flung overboard to stop the infection. I will no longer, my lords, be charged with making under-statements. I formerly told your lordships that one ship had brought 700 slaves; and I stopped there, for I thought it was enough to harrow up the feelings of all. But, my lords, there was another ship which brought a cargo of 980 of these poor miserable, unoffending beings; and out of those 980, without accident, without any direct murder, without any of them having been thrown overboard in chase, how many do your lordships think perished on the voyage? No fewer than 600 became the victims of the hardships and sufferings inseparable from the traffic, and from the effects of the pestilential hold in which they were confined. Four other ships sailed from the same port with 2,400 negroes on board, of whom no fewer than 1,500 fell a sacrifice on the voyage. As long as the slave trade was only contraband, this foul calculation was constantly made: “If we escape three or four times, and are taken once,—nay, if we escape only one-half the times, and are captured the other half, the profits are so enormous—twenty, thirty, fifty thousand pounds on one voyage—that the risk is well worth running, and, therefore, run it we will.” In the year 1809, I had the singular felicity of laying the axe to the root of such traffic, and of stopping all such calculations, by making the slave trade felony, and punishing it as such. I knew that they who would run the risk when the thing could be reduced to a calculation of profit and loss would be slow to put their heads into that halter which, like all other felons, their crimes deserved. The bill was passed unanimously through all its stages in the House of Commons; and since that period, since it has been made felony, I will venture to say, that though English capital may be covertly employed through many channels in promoting the traffic, English subjects have ceased personally to engage in it. The like course must be taken if we would put an end to the same crimes in other countries. Piracy and murder must be called by their right names, and visited with their appropriate penalties. That the Spanish and Portuguese traders now make the same calculations which I have been describing is a certain fact. I will name one, Captain Jura, of the ship Socorro, who on being captured, had the effrontery to boast that he had made fourteen slave voyages, and that this was the first time he had been taken. Well might he resolve to run so slight a risk for such vast gains; but had the fate of a felon pirate awaited him, not all the gains which might tempt his sordid nature would have prevailed upon him to encounter that hazard.

I formerly recounted instances of murder done by wholesale in the course of the chase of our cruizers. I might have told a more piteous tale ; and I will no longer be accused of understating this part of the case either. Two vessels were pursued. One after another negroes were seen to be thrown overboard, to the number of a hundred and fifty, of all ages—the elder and stronger ones loaded with their fetters, to prevent them from swimming or floating—the weaker were left unchained to sink or expire ; and this horrible spectacle was presented to the eyes of our cruizers' men : they saw, unable to lend any help, the water covered with those hapless creatures, the men sinking in their chains ; the women, and—piteous sight !—the infants and young children, struggling out their little strength in the water, till they too were swallowed up, and disappeared !

I now approach a subject, not indeed, more full of horrors, or of greater moment, but on which the attention of the people has for some time past been fixed with an almost universal anxiety, and for your decision upon which they are now looking with the most intense interest, let me add, with the liveliest hopes. I need not say, that I mean the great question of the condition into which the slaves of our Colonies were transferred, as preparatory to their liberation—a subject upon which your table has been loaded with so many petitions from millions of your fellow-countrymen. It is right that I should first remind your lordships of the anxious apprehensions which were entertained in 1833, when the Act was passed, because a comparison of those fears with the results of the measure, will form a most important ingredient of the argument which I am about to urge for the immediate liberation of the apprentices. I well remember how uneasy all were in looking forward to the first of August, 1834, when the state of slavery was to cease, and I myself shared in those feelings of alarm when I contemplated the possible event of the vast, but yet untried experiment. My fears proceeded first from the character of the masters. I knew the nature of man, fond of power, jealous of any interference with its exercise, uneasy at its being questioned, offended at its being regulated and constrained, averse above all to have it wrested from his hands, especially after it has been long enjoyed, and its possession can hardly be severed from his nature. But I also was aware of another and a worse part of human nature. I knew that whoso has abused power, clings to it with a yet more convulsive grasp. I dreaded the nature of man, prone to hate whom he has injured—because I knew that law of human weakness which makes the oppressor hate his victim, makes him who has injured never forgive, fills the wrong-doer with vengeance against those whose right it is to vindicate those injuries on his own head. I knew that this abominable law of our evil nature is not confined to different races, contrasted hues, and strange features, but prevails also between white man and white—for I never yet knew any one hate me, but those whom I had served, or those who had done me some foul injustice. Why then should I expect other feelings to burn within the planter's bosom, and govern his conduct towards the unhappy beings who had suffered so

much and so long at his hand? But on the part of the slaves I was not without some anxiety when I considered the corrupting effects of that degrading system under which they had for ages groaned, and recognized the truth of the saying in the first and the earliest of profane poets, that "the day which makes a man a slave, robs him of half his value." I well might think that the West Indian slave offered no exception to this maxim; that the habit of compulsory labour might have incapacitated him from voluntary exertion; that over-much toil might have made all work his aversion; that never having been accustomed to provide for his own wants, while all his supplies were furnished by others, he might prove unwilling or unfit to work for himself, the ordinary inducements to industry never having operated on his mind. In a word, it seemed not unlikely that long disuse of freedom might have rendered him too familiar with his chains to set a right value on liberty; or that, if he panted to be free, the sudden transition from the one state to the other, the instantaneous enjoyment of the object of his desires might prove too strong for his uncultured understanding, might upset his principles, and render him dangerous to the public peace. Hence it was that I entertained some apprehensions of the event, and yielded reluctantly to the plan proposed of preparing the negroes for the enjoyment of perfect freedom by passing them through the intermediate state of indentured apprenticeship. Let us now see the results of their sudden though partial liberation, and how far those fears were realized; for upon this must entirely depend the solution of the present question—whether or not it is safe now to complete the emancipation, which, if it only be safe, we have not the shadow of right any longer to withhold.—Well, then, let us see.

The First of August arrived: that day so confidently and joyously anticipated by the poor slaves, and so sorely dreaded by their hard task-masters: and if ever there was a picture interesting to look upon—if ever there was a passage in the history of a people redounding to their eternal honour—if ever there was a complete refutation of all the scandalous calumnies which had been heaped upon them for ages, as if in justification of the wrongs which we had done them, that picture, and that passage are to be found in the uniform and unvarying history of that people throughout the whole of the West India Islands. Instead of the fires of rebellion, lit by a feeling of lawless revenge and resistance to oppression, the whole of those islands were, like an Arabian scene, illuminated by the light of contentment, joy, peace, and good-will towards all men. No civilized people, after gaining an unexpected victory, could have shown more delicacy and forbearance than was exhibited by the slaves at the great moral consummation which they had attained. There was not a look or a gesture which could offend the eyes of their masters. Not a sound escaped from negro lips which could wound the ears of the most feverish planter in the islands. All was joy, mutual congratulation, and hope. The negroes felt

that their fetters had been loosed, they looked forward with expectation to the time when they should be struck off, and when even the degrading marks which they had left should be wholly effaced. This peaceful joy, this delicacy towards the feelings of others, was all that was to be seen, heard, or felt, on that occasion, over all the chain of the Antilles. Amusements there were none that day—not even those amusements by which the negroes had been accustomed to beguile the hard lot of slaves, and which reminded them of the country of their forefathers; no, for the negroes are eminently a pious race, and they kept as a sacred Sabbath the day of their liberation. They enjoy the advantages of much religious instruction, and partake in a large measure of spiritual consolation. These blessings they derive, not from the ministrations of an established church (not that such ministrations are withheld from them), but other instructors are found more conversant with their feelings, and therefore more acceptable to them. They had the meek and humble pastor, who although, perhaps, inferior in secular accomplishments, was not the less calculated to guide them in the paths of religion. But the Missionary, not set above them by great learning—not too refined by any peculiarities so as to differ from them—passing the time among them during the week in the same way as he ministers to them on the Sabbath—he is their friend in common matters, as well as their guide in religion. Nor can I pass over this part of the case, without offering my humble tribute of heartfelt admiration of the labour and zeal of these pious and disinterested men. I know, my lords, that if I were to appeal on this subject to my noble friend (Lord Sligo), he would repeat the testimony he elsewhere bore to the same high merits, when he promulgated his honest opinion that, “for the origin of all religious feeling among the negroes, it is among the missionaries and not the clergy we must look.” And therefore it was, that fourteen years ago I felt all the anxiety to which I have referred, when it was my lot to drag before the Commons of England the persecutors of one of the most devoted, most pious, and most unfortunate of that class of men, who, because of his self-devotion, had been hunted down, and made to die the death, for merely teaching the gospel of peace to the negroes in one of the West India Islands. And then it was, and I glory in the recollection, that the first of those blows was struck of which we now happily live to witness the result—when the first step was taken towards rendering the negro in our colonies happy, free, and enlightened.

Well, the first of August came, and so far from the day of Emancipation being one of riot and debauchery, the whole of the negro population kept it as a most sacred festival, and in this light I am convinced it will ever be viewed in the West Indies to the end of time. All the churches of the islands were crowded from early dawn with congregations of orderly, well-behaved, pious persons—five or six times each church was filled, and as soon as emptied filled again—all pressing forward, not coldly to comply with a formal ceremonial, not to give mouth worship or eye worship, but to

render humble and hearty thanks to God for their freedom at length bestowed. In that island, where the bounty of nature seems to provoke the appetite to indulgence, and to scatter with a profuse hand all the means of excitement, I state the fact when I say, not one negro was, on that first day of August, found in a state of intoxication. Three hundred and forty thousand slaves in Jamaica were at once set free on that day; and the peaceful festivity of these simple men was disturbed only on a single estate, in one parish, by the irregular conduct of three or four persons, who were immediately kept in order, and tranquillity in one hour restored.

But it was predicted the termination of slavery was to be the end of all labour; that no man would work unless compelled—much less would any one work for hire. The cart-whip was to resound no more—and no more could exertion be obtained from the indolent African. I set the fact against these predictions. I never have been in the West Indies; I was one of those whom under the name of reasoners and theorists, and visionaries, all planters pitied for incurable ignorance of Colonial affairs; one of those who were forbidden to meddle with matters of which they only could judge who had the practical knowledge of experienced men on the spot obtained. Therefore, I now appeal to the fact; and I also appeal to one who has been in the West Indies; is himself a planter, and was an eye-witness of the things upon which I call for his confirmatory testimony. It is to my noble friend (Lord Sligo) that I appeal. He knows, for he saw, that ever since slavery ceased there has been no want of inclination to work in any part of Jamaica, and that labour for hire is now to be had without the least difficulty by all who can afford to pay wages; the apprentices cheerfully working for those who will pay them, during the hours not appropriated to their masters. My noble friend made an inquisition as to the state of this important matter in a large part of his government; and I have his authority for stating, that in nine estates out of ten, labourers for hire were to be had without the least difficulty. Yet this was the people of whom we were told with a confidence that set all contradiction at defiance, with an insulting pity for the ignorance of us who had no local experience, that without the lash there would be no work done, and that when it ceased to vex him, the African would sink into sleep. The prediction is found to have been ridiculously false; the negro peasantry is as industrious as our own; and wages furnish a more effectual stimulus than the scourge. Oh, but, said the men of colonial experience—the true practical men—this may do for some kinds of produce. Cotton may be planted—coffee may be picked—indigo may be manufactured—all these kinds of work the negro may probably be got to do; but at least the cane will cease to grow—the cane-piece can no more be hoed—nor the plant be hewn down—nor the juice boiled—and sugar will altogether cease out of the land. Now let the man of experience stand forward, the practical man, the inhabitant of the Colonies—I require that he now come forth with his prediction, and I meet him

with the fact. Let him but appear; and I answer for it, we shall hear him prophesy no more. Put to silence by the fact, which even these confident men have not the courage to deny, they will at length abandon this untenable ground. Twice as much sugar by the hour was found in my noble friend's inquiry (Lord Sligo) to be made since the apprenticeship, as under the slave-system, and of a far better quality; and one planter on a vast scale has said that, with twenty free-labourers he could do the work of a hundred slaves. But linger not on the islands where the gift of freedom has been but half bestowed—look to Antigua and Bermuda, where the wisdom and the virtue has been nobly displayed, of at once giving complete emancipation.

. Antigua!—what has happened there? There, there has not been even the system of indentured apprentices. In Antigua and the Bermudas, nor would there have been at Montserrat, if the Upper House had not thrown out the bill which was prepared by the planters themselves [there has been no such preparatory step.] In Antigua and the Bermudas, since the first of August, 1834, not a slave or indentured apprentice was to be found. Well, had idleness reigned there—had indolence supplanted work—had there been any deficiency of crop? No. On the contrary, there had been an increase, and not a diminution of crop. But then we were told by those whose experience was reckoned worth so much more than our reasoning, that even if by some miracle industry should be found compatible with liberty, of which, indeed, we in our profound ignorance of human nature had been wont to regard it as the legitimate offspring; at all events, the existence of order and tranquillity was altogether hopeless. After so long being inured to the abject state of slavery, its sudden cessation, the instant transition from bondage to freedom, must produce convulsions all over the colonies, and the reign of rebellion and anarchy must begin. Not content with reasoning, the practical men condescend to tax their luxuriant imaginations for tropes to dazzle and delude whom their arguments might fail to convince. The child could not walk alone if his leading-strings were withdrawn—the full-grown tree could not be transplanted—the limbs cramped by the chain could not freely move—the maniac might not safely be freed from the keeper's control—and Mr. Windham used to bring the play of his own lively fancy upon the question, and say that if it was a cruel thing to throw men out of the window, he saw no great kindness in making up for the injury you had done by throwing them back again into the house. Alas! for all those prophecies, and reasonings, and theories, and fine figures of speech! The dawn of the First of August chased away the phantoms, and instead of revolt and conspiracy, ushered in order and peace. But the fanciful men of experience, the real visionaries of the West Indies, though baffled, were not defeated. Only wait, they said, till Christmas—all who know the negro character then dread rebellion—all experience of negro habits shows that to be the true season of revolt. We did wait for this dreaded Christmas; and what was the result? I will go for it to Antigua, for it is the

strongest case, there being there no indentured apprentices, no preparatory state, no transition, the chains being at once knocked off, and the negroes made at once free. For the first time within the last thirty years, at the Christmas of the year 1834, martial law was not proclaimed in the island of Antigua. You call for facts; here is a fact—a fact that speaks volumes. You appeal to experience, here it is, your own experience. And with these facts, and this experience before us, I call on those *soi disant* men of experience—those men who scoffed at us—who laughed to scorn what they called our visionary, theoretical schemes—schemes that never could be carried into effect without rebellion and the loss of the colonies. I say, my lords, I call on these experienced men to come forward, and, if they can, deny one single iota of the statement I am now making. Let those who thought that with the use of those phrases, “a planter of Jamaica,” “the West India interest,” “residence in Jamaica and its experience,” flung into the scale of oppression, could make that of mercy kick the beam—let them, I say, hear what I tell, for it is but the fact that when the chains were knocked off there was not a single breach of the peace committed either on the day itself, or on the Christmas festival which followed. Well, my lords, beaten from these two positions, where did the experienced men retreat to—under what flimsy pretext did they next undertake to disparage the poor negro race? Had I not seen it in print, and been otherwise informed of the fact, I could not have believed it possible that from any reasonable man any such absurdity could issue. They actually held out this last fear, which, like the others, was fated to be dissipated by the fact. “Wait only,” said they, “till the anniversary of the 1st of August, and then you will see what the negro character is, and how little these indentured apprentices are fit to be intrusted with freedom.” Was there ever such an absurdity uttered? as if, my lords, the man who could meet with firm tranquillity and peaceful thankfulness the event itself, was likely to be roused to rebellion and rioting by the recollection of it a year afterwards! My lords, in considering this matter, I ask you not to take advantage of other men’s experience, by making its fruits your own—to observe what they have done or have suffered, and, wise by the example, to follow or to avoid. That indeed is the part of wisdom, and reflecting men pride themselves upon pursuing such a course. But I ask nothing of the kind—my desires are more humble—my demand is more moderate far. I only ask you to be guided by the results of your own experience, to make some gain by that for which you have paid so costly a price. Only do not reject the lesson which is said, in the Book you all revere, to teach even the most foolish of our foolish kind, only show yourselves as ready to benefit by experience as the fool whom it proverbially is able to teach—and all I desire is gained.

But now, my lords, my task is accomplished, my work is done. I have proved my case, and may now call for judgment. I have demonstrated every part of the proposition which alone it is necessary that I should maintain, to prove the title of the apprentice to instant freedom from his task-masters, because I have demon-

strated that the liberation of the slave has been absolutely, universally safe—attended with not even inconvenience, nay, productive of ample benefits to his master. I have shown that the apprentice works without compulsion, and that the reward of wages is a better incentive than the punishment of the lash. I have proved that labour for hire may anywhere be obtained as it is wanted, and can be purchased—all the apprentices working extra hours for hire, and all the free negroes, wherever their emancipation has been complete, working harder by much for the employers who have wherewithal to pay them, than the slave or the apprentice can toil for his owner or his master. Whether we look to the noble-minded colonies which have at once freed their slaves, or to those who still retain them in a middle and half-free condition, I have shown that the industry of the negro is undeniable, and that it is constant and productive, in proportion as he is the director of its application and the master of its recompence. But I have gone a great deal farther—I have demonstrated by a reference to the same experience, the same unquestioned facts, that a more quiet, peaceful, inoffensive, innocent race, is not to be found on the face of this earth than the Africans—not while dwelling in their own happy country, and enjoying freedom in their natural state, under their own palm trees, and by their native streams—but after they have been torn away from it, enslaved, and their nature perverted in your Christian land—barbarized by the policy of civilized states—their whole character disfigured, if it were possible to disfigure it—all their feelings corrupted if you could have corrupted them. Every effort has been made to spoil the poor African—every resource of wicked ingenuity exhausted to deprave his nature—all the incentives to misconduct placed around him by the fiend-like artifice of Christian civilized men—and his excellent nature has triumphed over all your arts—its unnatural culture has failed to make it bear the poisonous fruit that might well have been expected from such abominable husbandry. Though enslaved and tormented, degraded and debased, as far as human industry could effect its purpose of making him blood-thirsty and savage, his gentle spirit has prevailed, and preserved, in spite of all your prophecies, aye, and of all your efforts, unbroken tranquillity over the whole Caribbean sea! Have I not then proved my case? I show you that the whole grounds of the arrangement of 1833, the very pretext for withholding complete emancipation, alleged incapacity for labour, and risk of insurrection, utterly fail. I rely on your own records; I refer to that record which cannot be averred against; I plead the record of your own statute. On what ground does this preamble rest the necessity of the intermediate or apprentice state; all admitting that nothing but necessity could justify it? “Whereas it is expedient that provision should be made for promoting the industry, and securing the good conduct of the manumitted slaves.” These are the avowed reasons for the measure—these its only defence. All men confessed that were it not for the apprehension of liberated slaves not working voluntarily, and not behaving peaceably—of slavery being found to have unfitted them for industry,

and of a sudden transition to complete freedom being fraught with danger to the peace of society—you had no right to make them indentured apprentices, and must at once make them wholly free. But the fear prevailed which, by the event, I have now a right to call a delusion; and the apprenticeship was reluctantly agreed to. The delusion went farther. The planter succeeded in persuading us that he would be a vast loser by the change, and we gave him twenty millions sterling merely to indemnify him for the supposed loss. The fear is found to be utterly baseless—the loss is a phantom of the brain—a shape conjured up by the interested parties to frighten our weak minds; and the only reality in this mockery is the payment of that enormous sum to the crafty and fortunate magician for his incantations. The spell is dissolved—the charm is over—the unsubstantial fabric of calculating alarm, reared by the Colonial body with our help, has been crushed to atoms, and its fragments scattered to the wind. And now, I ask, suppose it had been ascertained in 1833, when you made the Apprenticeship law, that these alarms were absolutely groundless—the mere phantom of a sick brain, or contrivance of a sordid ingenuity—would a single voice have been raised in favour of the intermediate state? Would the words Indentured Apprenticeship ever have been pronounced? Would the man have been found endued with the courage to call for keeping the Negro in chains one hour after he had been acknowledged entitled to his freedom?

I freely admit that formerly, and before the event, when the measure was passed, the proof was upon us, who maintained that the experiment of emancipation was safe. We did not pretend to deny all risk; we allowed the possibility of a loss being sustained by the planters; nay, we did more; we took for granted there would be a loss, and a loss to the amount of twenty millions, and that vast sum we certainly paid to indemnify them. Then we had not the facts with us; all experience was said to be the other way; and because we could only offer argument against the opinions of practical men of local knowledge, we were fain to let them take every thing their own way, and receive our money by way of securing them against the possibility of damage. But now the case is reversed; the facts are all with us; experience has pronounced in our favour, and the burden of the proof is thrown on the planter, or whoever would maintain, contrary to the result of the trial already made, that there is any risk whatever in absolute emancipation. The case lies in a narrow compass; the sudden transition from absolute slavery to apprenticeship—from the condition of chattels to that of men—has been made without the least danger whatever, though made without the least preparation. It is for them who, in spite of this undoubted fact, maintain that the lesser step of substituting freedom for apprenticeship will be dangerous, though made after a preparation of three years. Therefore I am not bound to maintain the opposite proposition, by any one argument or a single fact. Nevertheless, I do prove the negative, against those upon whom it lies to prove the affirmative; I gratuitously demonstrate, both

by argument and by fact, that the transition to freedom from apprenticeship may be safely made. I appeal to the slavery of Antigua and Bermuda, where the whole process took place at once—where both steps were taken in one—and where yet there was more tranquillity than had ever before been enjoyed under the death-like silence of slavery. Nay, I prove even more than the safety of the step in question; for in those colonies the transition being so made at once, it follows, *a fortiori*, that the making the half transition, which alone remains to be made in the rest, is doubly free from all possible risk of any kind, either as to voluntary labour or orderly demeanour.

But this is not all—let us look at the subject from another point. The twenty millions have been paid in advance, on the supposition of a loss being incurred. No loss, but a great gain, has accrued to the planter. Then he has received our money for nothing; it is money paid under a mistake in fact, to propagate which he himself contributed. If such a transaction had happened between private parties, I know not that the payer of the money might not have claimed it back as paid under mistake; or if deception had been practised, that he was not equitably entitled to recover it. But without going so far, of this I am certain, that all men of honourable minds would in such circumstances have felt it hard to keep the party to his bargain. Again, view the matter from a different point, for I am desirous to have it narrowly examined on all sides. Suppose it is still maintained that the second step we require to be taken will be attended with risk—how much is the loss likely to be? Six years' apprenticeship and the emancipation were reckoned at twenty millions. No loss has as yet accrued, and four years have elapsed. Then what right have you to estimate the loss of the two years that remain at more than the whole sum? But unless it exceeds that sum, the planter by giving up these two years, manifestly loses nothing at all; for he has got his compensation, even supposing the total loss to happen in two years, for which the money was given on the supposition of a six years' diminished income. But suppose I make a present of this concession likewise, and admit that there may be a loss in the next two years, as there has been a gain in the former four—have not I a right to set off that gain against any loss, and then unless twice as much shall be lost yearly in future as has been gained in past years, the planter is on the whole a gainer, even without taking the twenty millions into the account; and although there should be that double rate of loss, contrary to all probability, even without these twenty millions, he will on the whole have lost nothing. But I will not consent to leave that vast sum out of the account. It shall go in diminution of the loss, if any has been suffered. It shall be reckoned as received by the planters; and unless they lose during the next two years, more than twenty millions over and above the gains they have made during the last four, I insist upon it that they be deemed to have suffered no loss at all, even if, contrary to all experience and all reason, they now begin to lose by the change.

What is the consequence of all this? That at the very least we have a right to make the planters bring their twenty millions to account, and give us credit for that sum—so that until their losses shall exceed it, they shall have no right whatever to complain.

I take now a new view of the subject, in order that we may have left no stone unturned, no part of the whole subject unexplored. Have we not at the very least a title to call upon the planters to consign the money into a third party's hands—to pay it, as it were, into Court—until it shall be ascertained whether they sustain any loss at all, and, if any, to what amount? I defy all the quibblers in the world to show what right the planters can have, if they insist upon retaining our money, now given for nothing, to keep the negroes out of their liberty, that money having been paid to compensate a supposed loss, and experience having demonstrated that instead of loss, the present change has already been to them a gain. My proposal is this, and if the planter be of good faith, it must at once settle the question—at least, it must bring their sincerity to the test. They say they are afraid of a loss by the apprenticeship ceasing; then let them either pay the money into Court, or keep an account of their losses, and if they, at the end of the two years, after emancipating the apprentices, shall be found to have incurred any loss, let them be repaid out of the money; I agree that they should be further compensated should their losses exceed the twenty millions, provided they will consent to repay all the money that exceeds the losses sustained. This is my proposal—and I am as certain of its being fair as I am convinced it will be rejected with universal horror by the planters.

Once more I call upon your lordships to look at Antigua and Bermuda. There is no getting over that: no answering it; no repelling the force with which our reason is assailed by the example of thirty thousand negroes liberated in one night—liberated without a single instance of disturbance ensuing, and with the immediate substitution of voluntary work for hire in the stead of compulsory labour under the whip. There is no getting over that—no answering it—no repelling the force with which it assails the ordinary reason of ordinary men. But it is said that those islands differ from Jamaica and Barbadoes, because they contain no tracts of waste or woody ground to which negroes may flee away from their masters, conceal themselves, and subsist in a Maroon state. I meet the objection at once in front, and I pledge myself to annihilate it in one minute by the clock. Why should free negroes run away and seek refuge in the woods, if slaves, or half slaves like apprentices, never think of escaping? That the slave should run away, that the apprentice should fly, is intelligible; but if they do not, why should a bettering of their condition increase their inclination to fly? They who do not flee from bondage and the lash; why should they from freedom, wages, independence, and comfort? But this is not all. If you dread their escape and marooning now,

what the better will you be in 1840? Why are they to be less disposed then than now to fly from you? Is there any thing in the training of the present system to make two years more of it disarm all dislike of white severity, all inclination for the state of the Maroon? The minute is not yet out, and I think I have disposed of the objection. Surely, surely, we are here upon ground often trodden before by the advocates of human improvement, the friends of extended rights. This is the kind of topic we have so often been fated to meet on other questions of deep and exciting interest. The argument is like that against the repeal of the Penal Laws respecting Catholics; if it proves any thing, it proves far too much; if there be any substance in it, the conclusion is that we have gone too far already, and must retrace our steps; either complete the emancipation of the Catholics, or re-enact the penal code. The enemies of freedom, be it civil or religious; be it political or personal; are all of the same sect, and deal in the same kind of logic. If this argument drawn from the danger of negroes eloping in 1838, should we emancipate the apprentices, is worth any thing at all, it is a reason for not emancipating them in 1840, and consequently, for repealing altogether the law of 1833. But I shall not live to hear any one man in any one circle of any one part of the globe, neither in the Old hemisphere nor in the New, venture to breathe one whisper in favour of so mischievous a course. But I will not stop here. Lives there, my lords, a man so ignorant of West Indian society, so blind to all that is passing in those regions, as to suppose that the continuance of the apprenticeship can either better the negro's condition, or win him over to more love for his master? I am prepared to grapple with this part also of the argument. I undertake to demonstrate that the state of the negro is in but a very few instances better, and in many, beyond all comparison, worse than ever it was in the time of slavery itself.

I begin by freely admitting that an immense benefit has been conferred by the cart-whip being utterly abolished. Even if the lash were ever so harshly or unsparingly or indiscriminately applied in execution of sentences pronounced by the magistrate, still the difference between using it in obedience to judicial command, and using it as the stimulus to labour is very great. The negro is no longer treated as a brute, because the motive to his exertions is no longer placed without himself in the driver's hand. This is, I admit, a very considerable change for the better in his condition, and it is the only one upon which he has to congratulate himself since the Act of Emancipation was passed. In no one other respect whatever is his condition improved—in many it is very much worse. I shall run over a few of these particulars, because the view of them bears most materially upon this whole question, and I cannot better prove the absolute necessity of putting an immediate end to the state of apprenticeship than by showing what the victims of it are daily fated to endure.

First of all, as to the important article of food, to secure a supply of which in sufficient abundance, the slave-regulating acts of all the islands have always been so anxiously directed—I will compare the prison allowance of Jamaica, with the apprentice allowance in Barbadoes, and other colonies, from which we have the returns, there being none in this particular from Jamaica itself. The allowance to prisoners is fourteen pints weekly of Indian corn, and different quantities of other grain; but comparing one will be sufficient for our purpose. In Barbadoes the allowance to apprentices is only ten pints, while in the Leeward Islands and Dominica it is no more than eight pints! for the Crown Colonies the slave allowance, before 1834, was twenty-one pints: in the same colonies the apprentice receives but ten, so that in the material article of food there is the very reverse of an improvement effected upon the negro's condition. Next, as to time—it is certain that he should have half a day in the week, the Friday, to work his own provision-ground, besides Saturday to attend the market, and the Sabbath for rest and religious instruction. The Emancipation Act specifies forty-five hours as the number which he shall work weekly for his master. But these are now so distributed as to occupy the whole of Friday; and even in some cases to intrench upon Saturday too. The planter, also, counts those hours invariably from the time when the negro, having arrived at the place of work, begins his labour. But as it constantly happens that some at least of the negroes on an estate have several miles to walk from their cottages, all the time thus consumed in going and returning is wholly lost to the negro. Nay, it is lost to the master as well as the apprentice, and so long as he is not compelled to reckon it in the statutory allowance, it will continue a loss to both parties. For as no reason whatever can be assigned why the negro huts should be on the frontier of the plantation, only make the time, frequently as much at present as three or four hours a day, consumed in going and returning, count for part of the forty-five hours a week, and I'll answer for it *all* the negroes will be provided with cottages near the place of their toil.

The next topic to which I shall advert, relates to the administration of justice; and this large and important subject I cannot pass over without a word to remind your lordships how little safe it is, how little deserving the name of justice, or anything like justice, that where you have two classes, you should separate them into conflicting parties, until they become so exasperated in their resentment, as scarcely to regard each other as brethren of the same species; and that you should place all the administration of justice in the hands of one dominant class, whose principles, whose passions, whose interests are likely to be preferred by the judges when they presume to sit where you have placed them on the judgment-seat. The chief and puisne judges are raised to their situations from amongst the class which includes the white men and planters. But worse than that, the jurors are taken from the same privileged body: jurors who are to assess

civil damages in actions for injuries done to the negroes—jurors who are to try bills of indictment against the whites for the maltreatment of the blacks—jurors who are to convict or acquit on those bills—jurors who are to try the slaves themselves—nay, magistrates, jailors, turnkeys, the whole apparatus of justice, both administrative and executive, exclusively in the hands of one race ! What is the consequence ? Why, it is proverbial that no bills are found for the blacks. Six bills of indictment were preferred by a humane individual at one assizes ; some for murder, and some for bad manslaughter, and every one of these six indictments were thrown out. Assizes after assizes the same thing happened, until at length wagers were held that no such bill would be found, and no one was found to accept them. Well was it for them that they declined, for every one of the bills preferred was ignored. Now, observe that in proceedings, as your lordships know, before grand jurors, not a tittle of evidence is heard for the prisoners ; every witness is in favour of the indictment, or finding of the bill ; but in all these instances the bills were flung out on the examination of evidence solely against the prisoner. Even in the worst cases of murder, as certainly and painfully committed as the sun shines at noon-day, monstrous to all, the bills were thrown out when half the witnesses for the prosecution remained to be examined. Some individuals swore against the prisoners, and though others tendered their evidence, the jury refused to hear them. Besides, the punishments inflicted are of monstrous severity. The law is wickedly harsh ; its execution is committed to hands that exasperate that cruelty. For the vague, undefined, undefinable offence of insolence, thirty-nine lashes ; the same number for carrying a knife in the pocket ; for cutting the shoot of a cane plant, fifty lashes, or three months' imprisonment in that most loathsome of all dungeons, a West Indian gaol.

There seems to have prevailed at all times amongst the governors of our colonies a feeling, of which I grieve to say the governors at home have ever and anon largely partaken, that there is something in the nature of a slave—something in the habits of the African negro—something in the disposition of the unfortunate hapless victims of our own crimes and cruelties, which requires a peculiar harshness of treatment from their rulers, and makes what in other men's cases we call justice and mercy, cruelty to society and injustice to the law in theirs—inducing us to visit with the extremity of rigour in the African, what, if done by our own tribes, would be slightly visited or not at all, as though there were in the negro nature something so obdurate that no punishment with which they can be punished would be too severe. Prodigious, portentous injustice ! As if we had any one to blame but ourselves—as if we had any right to visit on him that character if it were obdurate, those habits if they were insubordinate, that dishonest disposition if it did corrupt his character (all of which I deny, and which experience proves to be contrary to fact and truth) even if these statements were all truth, instead of being foully slanderous and absolutely false, we of all men have ourselves to

blame, ourselves to tax, and ourselves to punish, at least for the self-abasement, for we have been the very causes of corrupting the negro character. If some capricious despot in his career of ordinary tyranny, were to tax his imagination to produce something more monstrous and unnatural than himself, and were to place a dove among vultures, or engraft a thorn on the olive tree, much as we should marvel at the caprice, we should be still more astounded at the expectation, which exceeds even a tyrant's proverbial unreasonableness, that he should gather grapes from the thorn, or that the dove should be habituated to a thirst for blood. Yet that is the caprice, that is the unreasonable, the foul, the gross, the monstrous, the outrageous, incredible injustice of which we are hourly guilty towards the whole of the ill-fated African race!

My lords, we fill up the measure of injustice by severely executing laws badly conceived, in a still more atrocious and cruel spirit. The whole punishments smell of blood. If the treadmill stop in consequence of the languid limbs and exhausted frames of the victims, within a minute the lash resounds through the mansion of woe—if the stone spread out to be broken, do not crumble fast enough beneath the arms already scarred, flayed, and wealed by the whip, again the scourge tears their half-healed flesh. I myself have heard within the last three hours, from a person who was an eye-witness of the appalling and disgusting fact, that a leper was cut to pieces by stripes with the rest. And in passing, let me here note the universal but cruel practice of placing the patients stricken with infectious diseases in hospitals, and in prisons among others, upon almost all private estates; and the no less unjust and exclusively West Indian practice of cruelly and stingily compelling the prisoners to go out daily and find their own food, instead of the master supplying them in the gaol—a refinement of harshness and meanness not, I venture to assert, ever reached by the tyrant-master of the Siberian mines. But I was speaking of the public prison, and there as the leper had been scourged, so when a miserable wretch whose legs were one mass of ulcerated flesh from former inflictions, gave some offence to his task-masters, he was on those limbs mangled anew by the merciless application of the lash. I have told you how the bills for murdering negroes were systematically thrown out by the Grand Juries. But you are not to imagine that bills are never found against whites. A person of this caste had dared, under feelings of excited indignation, to complain to the regular constituted authorities. Did he obtain redress? No, instead of receiving for his gallant conduct the thanks of the community, he had a bill found against him, which presented him as a nuisance! I have within the last two hours, amid the new mass of papers just laid before your lordships, culled a sample which, I believe, represents the whole odious mass. Eleven females have been flogged, starved, lashed, attached to the treadmill, and compelled to work until nature could no longer endure their sufferings. At the moment when the wretched victims were about to fall off—when they could no longer bring down the mechanism and continue the movement, they were suspended by

their arms, and at each revolution of the wheel, received new wounds on their members, until, in the language of that law so grossly outraged in their persons, they “languished and died.” Ask you if a crime of this murderous nature went unvisited, and if no inquiry was made respecting its circumstances? The forms of justice were on this head peremptory, even in the West Indies—and those forms, the handmaids of Justice were present, though their sacred Mistress was far away. The coroner duly attended, and his jury were regularly impannelled. Eleven inquisitions were held, eleven inquiries were made, eleven verdicts were returned. For Murder? Manslaughter? Misconduct? No; but that “they died by the visitation of God.” A lie!—a perjury!—a blasphemy! The visitation of God! Yes, for it is among the most awful of those visitations by which the inscrutable purposes of his will are mysteriously accomplished, that he sometimes arms the wicked with power to oppress the guiltless: and if there be any visitation more dreadful than another—and which more tries the faith and vexes the reason of erring mortals, it is when Heaven showers down upon the earth the plague—not of scorpions—or pestilence—or famine—or war—but of Unjust Judges and perjured Jurors—wretches who pervert the law to wreak their personal vengeance or compass their sordid ends, and forswear themselves on the Gospels of God, to the end that injustice may prevail, and the innocent be destroyed!

“Sed nos immensum Spatiis confecimus æquor,
Et jam tempus equum fumantia solvere colla.”

Now, my lords, it is for the purpose of stopping such enormities as these, of correcting the administration of justice, of securing the comforts and restraining the torments to which the negroes are now subject, of amending the discipline of prisons, and of giving the necessary powers for enforcing the local acts—it is with these views that I propound to your lordships the first five resolutions, to have effect during, I trust, the very brief period which will elapse between this hour and the time when freedom is finally established. My lords, I entirely concur in what was formerly said by Mr. Burke, and afterwards repeated by Mr. Canning, that while the making of laws was confined to the owners of slaves, nothing they did was ever found real or effectual. And when, perchance, anything was accomplished, it had not, as Mr. Burke said, “an executive principle.” But, when they find you determined to do your duty, it is proved, by the example which they have given in passing the Apprenticeship Amendment Act, that they will even outstrip you, to prevent your interference with them. Therefore, if your resolutions demonstrate that you are in good earnest, depend upon it a corresponding disposition will be evinced on the other side of the Atlantic. I look forward, most undoubtedly, to great improvements being effected by the step which I propose here, and which will be followed up elsewhere. These improvements are, however, only to be regarded as temporary expedients, as mere palliatives of an enormous mischief; and in no sense substi-

tutes for that complete and final emancipation which I have demonstrated to be safe, expedient, useful, and imperative.

Let freedom then be once established, place the negroes on the same footing with other men, give them the uncontrolled power over their time and labour, and it will become the interest of the planter, as well as the rest of the community, to treat the negro well, for their comfort and happiness depend on his industry and good behaviour. The African, placed on the same footing with other men, becomes in reality our fellow-citizen,—to our feelings, as well as in his own nature, our equal, our brother. No difference of origin or of colour can now prevail to keep the two castes apart. The negro, master of his own labour, only induced to lend his assistance, if you make it his interest to help you, yet that aid being absolutely necessary to preserve your existence, becomes an essential portion of the community, nay, the very portion upon which the whole must lean for support. This ensures him all his rights; this makes it not only no longer possible to keep him in thralldom, but places him in a complete and intimate union with the whole mass of Colonial society. Where the driver and the gaoler once bore sway, the lash resounds no more; nor does the clank of the chain any more fall upon the troubled ear; the fetter has ceased to gall the vexed limb, and the very mark disappears, which for a while it had left. All races and colours run together the same glorious race of improvement. Peace unbroken, harmony uninterrupted, calm, unruffled, reigns in mansion and in field—in the busy street, and the fertile valley, where nature, with the lavish hand she extends under the tropical sun, pours forth all her bounty profusely, because received in the lap of cheerful industry, not extorted by hands cramped with bonds. Delightful picture of general prosperity and social progress in all the arts of civility and refinement!

These forms are pleasing to contemplate even in the imagination; but another form is nigh. I do not deny that there is danger, nor can I close my eyes to it. The planters, as usual, look to the wrong quarter. Their interest tells them that they are in jeopardy, but it is a false interest, and misleads them as to the nature of the risk they run. They, who always dreaded Emancipation—who were alarmed at the prospect of negro indolence, who stood aghast at the vision of negro rebellion should the chains cease to clink, or the lash to resound through the air, affrighting themselves, and scaring you with imaginary apprehensions from the transition to entire freedom out of the present intermediate state. But that intermediate state is the very source of all their real danger; and I disguise not its magnitude from myself. If through any notion of firmness, you remain attached to the present system; if “the hope deferred”—that hope which you have raised in their hearts—“make their hearts sick;” if by a frustration of all the expectations which they are now cherishing, you shall goad them into the entertainment of feelings which, generally speaking, are found alien to their nature, but from which no portion of mankind with human passions and feelings could at such a conjuncture be totally

free,—if this infant liberty which you have given them, which you have already taught them by high promises to value, and the partial enjoyment of which has, believe me, only whetted their thirst for enjoying the full draught—if, I say, you continue, madly excited either by childish prejudices or influenced by devilish machinations, to swathe the limbs of the giant infant, then I would have you to recollect in what neighbourhood you are doing this—then I would have you remember that they are within sight of a great negro republic, where the chains of the slave were broken by violence, and by violence caused by the negro,—then I would have you remember that the sparks of this wildfire of resistance which is raging to windward, may spread and kindle over all the islands of that sea, and that that whole race, from the fierce Coromantin to the peaceful Eboe, will be found up in arms,—then, I say, you will have to contemplate—

“ The other shape,

If shape it might be called, that shape had none
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb ;
Or substance might be called that shadow seemed,
For each seemed either ; black it stood as night,
Fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell.”

I turn away from the horrid vision, that my eye may rest once more upon the prospect of enduring empire, and peace founded upon freedom. I regard the freedom of the negro as accomplished and sure. Why? Because it is right ; because he has shown himself fit for it ; because a pretext, or a shadow of a pretext can no longer be devised for withholding that right from its possessor. I know that all men at this day take a part in the question, and they will no longer bear to be imposed upon, now that they are well informed. My reliance is firm and unflinching upon the great change which I have witnessed ; the education of the people unfettered by party or by sect, witnessed from the beginning of its progress, I may say, from the hour of its birth. Yes ! it was not for a humble man like me to assist at royal births with the illustrious prince who condescended to grace the pageant of his opening session, or the Great Captain and statesmen in whose presence I am now proud to speak. But with that illustrious prince, and with the father of the queen, I assisted at that other birth, more auspicious still. With them, and with the head of the house of Russell, incomparably more illustrious in my eyes, I watched over its cradle ; I marked its growth ; I rejoiced in its strength ; I witnessed its maturity ; I have been spared to see it ascend the very height of supreme power ; directing the councils of the state ; accelerating every great improvement ; uniting itself with every good work ; propping all useful institutions ; extirpating abuses in all our systems ; passing the bounds of our European dominion, and in the New world, as in the Old, proclaiming that freedom is the birth-right of man, that distinction of colour gives no title to oppression, that the chains now loosened must be struck off, and even the marks they have left effaced ; proclaiming this by the same eternal law of our nature which makes nations the master of their own destiny, and which in Europe has caused

every tyrant's throne to quake ! But they need feel no alarm at the progress of light, who defend a limited monarchy and support popular institutions ; who place their chiefest pride, not in ruling over slaves, be they white or be they black ; not in protecting the oppressor, but in wearing a constitutional crown, in holding the sword of justice with the hand of mercy, in being the first citizen of a country whose air is too pure for slavery to breathe, and on whose shores, if the captive's foot but touch, his fetters of themselves fall off. To the resistless progress of this great principle I look with a confidence which nothing can shake ; it makes all improvement certain, it makes all change safe which it produces ; for none can be brought about, unless prepared in a cautious and salutary spirit. So now the fulness of time is come for at length discharging our duty to the African captive. I have demonstrated to you that every thing is ordered ; every previous step taken ; all safe, by experience shown to be safe, for the long-desired consummation. The time has come ; the trial has been made ; the hour is striking : you have no longer a pretext for hesitation, or faltering, or delay. The slave has shown, by four years' blameless behaviour, and devotion to the pursuits of peaceful industry, that he is as fit for his freedom as any English peasant, ay, and as any lord whom I now address. I demand his rights ; I demand his liberty without stint, in the name of justice and of law ; in the name of reason ; in the name of God, who has given you no right to work injustice ; I demand that your brother be no longer trampled upon as your slave ! I make my appeal to the Commons, who represent the free people of England ; and I require at their hands the performance of that condition for which they paid so enormous a price ; that condition which all their constituents are in breathless anxiety to see fulfilled ! I appeal to this house ; Hereditary judges of the first tribunal in the world, to you I appeal for justice ! Patrons of all the arts that humanize mankind ; under your protection I place humanity herself ! To the merciful sovereign of a free people, I call aloud for mercy ; to the hundreds of thousands for whom half a million of her Christian sisters have cried aloud, I ask that their cry may not have risen in vain ! But first, I turn my eye to the throne of all justice, and devoutly humbling myself before Him who is of purer eyes than to behold such vast iniquities, I implore that the curse hovering over the head of the unjust and the oppressor, be averted from us ; that your hearts may be turned to mercy ; and that over all the earth His will may at length be done !



